

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 CFR § 1.111
Serial No. 09/738,293

REMARKS

A total of 65 claims remain in the present application. The foregoing amendments are presented in response to the Office Action mailed August 28, 2003, wherefore reconsideration of this application is requested.

By way of the above-noted amendments, original independent claim 1 has been amended to define that the collaboration services suite is adapted to enable a communications session between at least two members of the team over at least a switched telephone network (STN). Original independent claim 63 has been amended to more clearly define features of the present invention.

In preparing the above-noted amendments, careful attention was paid to ensure that no new subject matter has been introduced.

Referring now to the text of the Office Action:

- a) claim 1 stands objected to in view of a typographical error identified in line 11 of that claim;
- b) claims 1-47, 49, 50, 53-58, 61 and 63-65 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as being unpatentable over the teaching of United States Patent No. 5,793,365 (Tang et al.);
- c) claim 48 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over the teaching of United States Patent No. 5,793,365 (Tang et al.) in view of "Applicant Prior Art"; and

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- d) claims 51, 52, 59, 60 and 62 are objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

As an initial matter, applicant appreciated the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 51, 52, 59, 60 and 62. The Examiner's rejections of claims 1-47, 49, 50, 53-58, 61 and 63-65 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), and claim 48 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are believed to be traversed by the above-noted claim amendments, and further in view of the following discussion.

United States Patent No. 5,793,365 (Tang et al.) teaches a system and methods which facilitate collaboration between networked computer users. According to Tang et al, each networked computer user is provided with a user interface displaying visual representations of selected other computer users, generally of those workers in the user's workgroup, and further provides communication mechanisms enabling the user to contact any of the displayed workers. The user interface displays presence, availability and activity information (see Tang et al., FIG. 1B) for each person in the user's contact list. This activity information is primarily related to whether or not the user is currently using their PC, and thus can encompass participation in any communications sessions that are mediated by their PC (See Tang et al., FIGs. 5-9). Collaboration between the networked users is facilitated by a communications server 80 (See Tang et al., FIG. 11) which enables a user to initiate and participate in communications sessions with each person in the user's contact list. Thus:

"A communications server 80 handles communication services between the user's computer 101 and other computers 101 on the network. The communication server 80 has interfaces to various communication applications, such as a video conference server 81, an audio conference server 83, an email application 85, and a text chat application 87. The applications may be conventionally provided as part of the communication infrastructure of the system 100. A suitable communications server 80 and supporting applications is

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Sun Microsystems ShowMe.TM. desktop conferencing system, including ShowMe Video.TM. and ShowMe Audio.TM." (Col. 12, ln. 61 – col 13, ln.4)

However, Tang et al do not teach or suggest that the system can support communication sessions that are not mediated by their PC. Tang et al do not teach or suggest that the system can support communications over a switched telephone network (STN) such as, for example, the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN). In particular, Tang provides no teaching about how presence and availability information could be provided for devices on a STN, as described in the present application.

In contrast, the present invention defines a system and methods for facilitating collaboration between members of a geographically dispersed team. The system comprises a collaboration services suite adapted to enable a communications session between at least two of the team members "over at least a switched telephone network (STN)". In particular, the present invention includes providing "a team member interface adapted to display the dynamic presence and availability information to each member of the team, and to enable a team member to request initiation by the collaboration services suite of a communications session with at least one other team member over at least the switched telephone network (STN)," Thus the present invention provides each team member with enhanced possibilities for communications within the team. In particular, a team member is made aware of communications devices associated with each team member, and the availability of the team member to be reached using each of those communications devices. This functionality extends to communications devices accessible only through the STN. Tang et al do not teach or suggest this feature, nor the advantages obtained thereby, as described in the present application. None of the other known prior art references supply the missing subject matter.

With specific reference to claims 63-65 Tang et al do not teach, suggest or even remotely contemplate a system in which video content of a multimedia session is exchanged

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through a data network between data terminals, while voice content of that same multimedia session is exchanged through a switched telephone network between voice communications devices. Nor do Tang et al. suggest any advantages that might be obtained thereby

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the presently claimed invention is clearly distinguishable over the teaching of the cited references, taken alone or in any combination. Thus it is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance, and early action in that respect is courteously solicited.

If any extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is required to obtain entry of this response, such extension is hereby respectfully requested. If there are any fees due under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17 which are not enclosed herewith, including any fees required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, please charge such fees to our Deposit Account No. 19-5113.

Respectfully submitted,



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